

Is It Wrong for a Christian to Pursue Money, Wealth, and Fame?

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Wealth and fame have known different misconceptions, especially from the prosperity gospel preachers who misquote the Scriptures. In some cases, material wealth and/or fame is viewed as a sign of blessing from God, while poverty is seen as a sign of disapproval. In other cases, wealthy and world-famous personalities are condemned to eventually favour the poor or moderate living conditions. However, the Bible makes it clear that neither poverty nor wealth nor [in]fame is a sin. In fact, both poverty and wealth can be the will of God and a blessing from Him. Money, wealth, and fame are resources that are not evil themselves, but making them our primary pursuit in life is sinful: "*Don't wear yourself out to get rich; because you know better, stop!*" [Proverbs 23:4](#).

Apostle Paul also addresses the issue of money in [1 Timothy 6:8–10](#)

If we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. **9** But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. **10** For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

This passage has often been misquoted as "*money is the root of all evil*" to make money and wealth the source (or root) of all evil in the world, which is clearly false. This passage condemns the **love of money** and not money itself. Having money is not a sin, but *loving* money is. The Bible makes it quite clear that sin is the root of all evil in the world ([Matthew 15:19](#); [Romans 5:12](#); [James 1:15](#)). Money or wealth itself, as a resource, is morally neutral (neither good nor bad) but the love of money, which implies an emotional affection, is the root of all sorts of evil as the desire to accumulate wealth is placed above God and others.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus likened the love of money to idolatry ([Matthew 6:24](#)) because it makes money as a "master" we serve at the expense of serving God. The love of money is what motivates people to lie, steal, bribe, cheat, gamble, embezzle and even commit murder. Those who desire to be rich (i.e., those who have the "love of money") are tempted and fall into the trap. For those whose ambition is to be rich, the Bible has many cautions. Concerning them, Jesus said that it is more difficult for them to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle ([Matthew 19:23–24](#)).

Being rich or famous is itself not a sin, but how we get and use it matters. God never condemns anyone for possessing riches, but He gives grave warnings to those who seek riches and place their hope in wealth more than they seek God ([1 Timothy 6:17](#)). Having wealth is not a bad thing if we keep our hope in God and use those resources for His glory.

The abundance of money or the lack of money is less important than our spiritual condition. The Bible offers many examples of God-fearing people, poor and rich. Job was wealthy and described as a man who was "*blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil*" ([Job 1:1](#)). Likewise, Solomon was blessed with significant wealth, as was King David, who had humble beginnings but a wealthy ending. On the other hand, Jesus lived in relative poverty and the apostles were not regarded wealthy, but they used everything they had to share Christ with others ([Luke 18:28](#)). "*Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all*" ([Proverbs 22:2](#)). Whether we have less or abundant, God's desire is for us to set our hearts on things above and not on things on this earth ([Matthew 6:19–21](#)).

It's no surprise that the world teaches us to believe that we must set goals to become rich and famous and pursue those ambitions relentlessly. Rather, the Bible teaches us to invest in doing God's will. The apostles and God's faithful servants never longed for things that guaranteed wealth in this world, but their top priority was to follow God's call in their lives, with faith and hope for the promised everlasting wealth ([Hebrews 11:13–16](#)). This doesn't, however, mean that we should not work in order to earn money! We are to work to earn a living ([Proverbs 14:23](#); [1 Timothy 5:8](#)) and give back to the Lord, joyfully and sacrificially ([2 Corinthians 9:7](#)). The Bible warns us against laziness and the financial ruin that inevitably results ([Proverbs 6:6–11](#)) and advises us to manage God's entrusted resources wisely, with discernment and the guidance of God's Spirit as good stewards of God ([1 Peter 4:10](#)). In fact, it is not wrong to work or be rich, but it is wrong to love money. It is not wrong to be poor, but it is wrong to waste money on trivial things.

For those who pursue fame, Jesus warns: "*Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted*" ([Matthew 23:12](#)). Similarly, [James 4:4](#) makes it clear that the friendship with the world is enmity against God, words echoed by Paul in [Romans 2:29](#): "*...he whose heart is changed seeks the praise of God and not of men*". The apostle Paul's testimony shows us that his life agenda excluded ambitions that would have warranted fame or would have earned him the accolades of men. His burning ambition was to do God's work and glorify Christ. That was his higher calling ([Philippians 3:4–6](#)). Likewise, the Christian efforts should be directed toward our various callings, motivated by the desire to do God's will.

In all, it's not wrong to have wealth or be popular but we should not make fame and fortune a primary pursuit in life. Rather, we should strive to do God's will and make glorifying God our primary goal. All people must acknowledge God as the owner of the possession (i.e., money, wealth, skills, knowledge, spiritual gifts, career and social status, to name a few) and strive to be His good stewards ([Matthew 25:14–30](#); [1 Timothy 6:17–21](#); [1 Corinthians 4:1–2](#)). Our love of money and fame often keeps us from loving and obeying Jesus ([Hebrews 13:5](#); [John 14:15](#)). Jesus blesses the humble ([Matthew 5:5](#)) and being rich and famous is not usually His plan for His children in this world. Our efforts should be aimed at glorifying God ([1 Corinthians 10:31](#)) as our gold standard for evaluating our own motives.

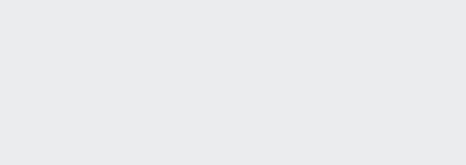
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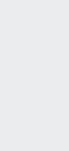
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